

Working life (gastroenterology)

This page provides useful information about the roles and responsibilities of gastroenterologists, where they work, who they work with and what they feel about their role

“I enjoy doing practical things and this specialty offered me the chance to carry out procedures such as endoscopies. I also like talking to patients, and the work allows for this also. There is a fairly broad range of conditions, which give me variety.” - **a gastroenterologist**

How your time is spent

Every day is different but most will divide their time between running specialist gastrointestinal and liver clinics, carrying out endoscopies, attending multidisciplinary meetings, conducting ward rounds, attending to administration and admitting new patients ('the acute take'), .

The number of patients seen in a day varies. In outpatients, you could see up to eight new patients or 12 follow ups per four hour clinic or a mixture of new and follow up patients. A specialist doing two [endoscopy](#) ^[1] lists in a day could see about 12 to 24 patients; but some cases are more complex and involve longer procedures such as the removal of polyps or gall stones.

Clinical meetings are also part of the working week.

[On call](#) ^[2] and working hours

Most gastroenterologists participate in [on call](#) ^[2] rotas. Fewer than 60% of consultants are routinely [on call](#) ^[2] at weekends.

Being on-call can be demanding as you are likely to be called in for procedures such as emergency [endoscopy](#) ^[1]. Most gastroenterologists are also part of the acute general medical on-call, which means they manage acute gastro and non-gastro admissions.

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**Who you will
work with?**

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Gastroenterologists work alongside:

- specialist nurses
- surgeons
- diagnostic and interventional radiologists
- pathologists
- oncologists
- medical secretaries and administrative staff
- clinical research teams (nurses, data managers and trials units)

They also work closely with:

- doctors in other specialties such as A&E

Attractions and challenges of the role

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Many gastroenterologists enjoy the varied nature of the specialty and being able to benefit from the continuing advances in the treatment of common conditions.

Gastroenterological procedures can make a big difference to a patient's life and many can be undertaken without surgery. Relatively non-invasive procedures, like removing a gall stone or taking out a difficult polyp without the need for an operation, are a routinely satisfying part of the role.

Many specialists cite the most challenging aspect as dealing with people who have incurable functional disorders. Helping patients to accept that they will have to learn to live with these problems (although symptoms may be alleviated) is a difficult part of the role.

The hours can be challenging.

Source URL: <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/doctors/roles-doctors/medicine/gastroenterology/working-life>

Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Endoscopy>

[2] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#On_call